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THESIS

PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT: A CORE IO CAPABILITY

by

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September 2007

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PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT: A CORE IO CAPABILITY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis postulates that in today's media environment and, with adversaries skillfully using propaganda to skirt nation's resolve, Perception Management is key to military success and should, therefore, be an Information Operations (IO) Core Capability vis-à-vis its current consideration in the U.S. doctrine as related IO capability.

The Kargil episode of 1999 was a political victory for India, while, from the Pakistani perspective, it was a successful tactical operation - albeit one which was not accompanied by a coordinated politico-diplomatic plan - turned into a politico-diplomatic setback. Pakistan's tactical successes in Kargil were not translated into strategic gains due to the lack of clarity over policy and, hence, no real Perception Management offensive mounted. On the contrary, India hyped the situation with the West using its media as a key element of Perception Management to win substantial political support. Eventually, Pakistani forces had to withdraw in the face of immense international pressures.

As only the Indian disinformation of Kargil was publicized and myths were promoted, the real history of Kargil became obscured. It is a central aim of this thesis to present the Pakistani case, to set the record, if not exactly straight, then to provide a balancing viewpoint through Pakistani eyes.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Victory smiles upon those who anticipate the changes in character of war, not upon those who wait to adapt themselves after the changes occur.

Giulio Douhet

A. FOREWORD

Over the last few decades, the world has experienced an information explosion. The bang is all about the exchange of information in real time and its usage to perform diverse functions. The effects of the boom have been felt in all walks of life – from politics to business, from education to international affairs, from sciences to art, from media to industry, from military to clergy, and so on. The theory that information is a vital tool with the power of combat weaponry is now a demonstrated reality.

The information revolution has also changed the way nations fight war. Conflicts have increasingly become contests over information and information systems. The ultimate aim is to penetrate the adversary's decision cycle and that can only be enabled through effective collection and collation of information. Mao TseTung¹ once said that in order to win victory one must try his best to seal the eyes and ears of the enemy, making him blind and deaf, and to create confusion in the minds of enemy commanders, driving them insane. His statement addresses what we see as Perception Management (PM) or influence operations. The concept of Perception Management is not something new, but the technology to support this concept and the resulting outcomes are of great interest today. Joseph S Nye, Jr notes that currently more focus is on the use of Hard Power (a theory that describes using military and economic means to influence the behavior or interests of other political bodies) and the efficacy and

¹ Selected works of Mao TseTung; On the Protracted War, May 1938. Accessed 15 April 2007. Available http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_09.htm.

utility of Soft Power (the ability to attract others by the legitimacy of policies and the values that underlie them -- power that comes from diplomacy, culture and history), is being ignored by the powerful in the world. The resultant outcomes are in front of our eyes and the problem of terrorism is now far graver than it was before 2001. The current struggle against Islamist terrorism is not a clash of civilizations; rather, it is a contest closely tied to the civil war raging within Islamic civilization between moderates and extremists. The United States and its allies will win only if they adopt policies that appeal to those moderates and use public diplomacy effectively to communicate that appeal.

Perception Management is not limited to the enemy; in fact, it is equally important in shaping the opinion of domestic and international audiences and in projecting the “true story.” When perceptions are not managed and truth is not told and all that one hears is repeated lies, there comes a time when reality, even if told, is not believed and is overcome by fallacies. It is all about influence.

Warfare in the information age has placed greater emphasis on influencing political and military leaders, as well as populations, to resolve conflict. Information technology (IT) has increased access to the means to directly influence the populations and its leaders. Therefore, in today’s environment the way forward is “Perception Management.”

B. THESIS OVERVIEW

1. Scope of the Study

This thesis postulates that in today’s media environment and, with adversaries skillfully using propaganda to skirt a nation’s resolve, Perception Management is key to military success. It should, therefore, be an Information Operations (IO) Core capability vis-à-vis its current consideration as related IO capability. This study remains within the bounds of existing U.S. Doctrine for Information Operations (IO) and its efficacy / applicability as seen in the *South Asian* context. This includes how Perception Management (PM) is a vital

concept and therein media is a crucial tool. This is vital in the Pakistan India scenario, especially in the context of the Kargil Conflict of 1999.

2. Structure of the Study

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter I provides an overview of the thesis. The second chapter gives a background of the key concepts, based on existing U.S. Doctrine, such as what is information, its essentials, what constitutes information environment, the concept of Information Operations (IO), and its effects and capabilities encompassing core, supporting and related IO capabilities. The third chapter explains the concept of Perception Management (PM). It elaborates on the need for PM, principles, tools, objectives, and the use of PM. The fourth chapter discusses media as “the tool” of PM in the South Asian environment and its efficacy. Chapter V takes on the Indo-Pak Kargil conflict of 1999 as a case study, endorsing the earlier concept that Pakistan’s failure of not successfully using PM enabled Indians to transform a “tactical failure” into a “strategic / diplomatic victory.” Pakistan had to pay the price for not getting their story out. As only the Indian “one-sided reporting” of Kargil was publicized, the real history of Kargil became obscured. The final chapter endeavors to draw conclusions and to outline future scope for study.

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II. BACKGROUND

A. KEY CONCEPTS

1. Information and its Essentials

Before discussing Information Operations, and getting into the key concept of Perception Management, it is essential to define what is meant by the term “Information.” According to Joint Publication 1-02 (Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, April 2006), “Information is facts, data, or instructions in any medium or form.” Information is, also, “the meaning that a human assigns to data by means of the known conventions used in their representation.” As outlined in JP 6-0 (Joint Communications System, March 2006), there are two basic uses for information. “The first is to help create situational awareness (SA) as the basis for a decision. The second is to direct and to coordinate actions in the execution of the decision. The information system must present information in a form that is both quickly understood and useful to the recipient. Many sources of information are imperfect and susceptible to distortion and deception.” The seven criteria shown in Figure 1 help characterize information quality.

Combining pieces of information with context produces ideas or provides knowledge. Good information management (IM) makes accomplishment of other tasks less complex. Today, improved technology in mobility, weapons, sensors, and communications continues to reduce reaction time, increase the tempo of operations, and generate large amounts of information. If information is not well managed, the reactions of commanders and decision makers may be degraded.



Figure 1. Information Quality Criteria as appeared in JP 6-0

2. Information Environment

As outlined in JP 3-13 (Information Operations, February 2006), “the information environment is the aggregate of individuals, organizations, and systems that collect, process, disseminate, or act on information. The actors include leaders, decision makers, individuals, and organizations. Resources include the materials and systems employed to collect, analyze, apply, or

disseminate information. The information environment is where humans and automated systems observe, orient, decide, and act upon information, and is, therefore, the principal environment of decision making. The information environment is made up of three interrelated dimensions: physical, informational, and cognitive.

- **Physical Dimension.** The physical dimension is composed of the command and control (C2) systems, and supporting infrastructures that enable individuals and organizations to conduct operations across air, land, sea, and space domains. It is, also, the dimension where physical platforms and the communications networks that connect them reside. This includes the means of transmission, infrastructure, technologies, groups, and populations. Comparatively, the elements of this dimension are the easiest to measure, and, consequently, combat power has traditionally been measured primarily in this dimension.
- **The Informational Dimension.** The informational dimension is where information is collected, processed, stored, disseminated, displayed, and protected. It is the dimension where the C2 of modern military forces is communicated, and where the commander's intent is conveyed. It consists of the content and flow of information. Consequently, it is the informational dimension that must be protected.
- **The Cognitive Dimension.** The cognitive dimension encompasses the mind of the decision maker and the target audience (TA). This is the dimension in which people think, perceive, visualize, and decide. It is the most important of the three dimensions. This dimension is, also, affected by a commander's orders, training, and other personal motivations. Battles and campaigns can be lost in the cognitive dimension. Factors such as leadership, morale, unit cohesion, emotion, state of mind, level of training, experience, situational awareness, as well as public opinion, perceptions, media, public information, and rumors influence this dimension."

Advancements in technology have enabled information to be collected, processed, stored, disseminated, displayed, and protected outside the cognitive process in quantities and at speeds that were previously unimagined. While technology makes great quantities of information available to audiences worldwide, perception-affecting factors provide the context which individuals use to translate data into information and knowledge. The finite amount of time and resources available to obtain information must be considered.

B. INFORMATION OPERATIONS (IO)

Information Operations (IO) are integral to the successful execution of military operations. A key goal of IO is to achieve and maintain information superiority. Information superiority provides a competitive advantage only when it is effectively translated into superior decisions. According to JP 3-13 (Information Operations, February 2006), “IO are described as the integrated employment of electronic warfare (EW), computer network operations (CNO), psychological operations (PSYOP), military deception (MILDEC), and operations security (OPSEC). This is in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp adversarial human and automated decision-making while protecting our own.” If we break the definition down and get rid of the commas, we come up with IO being the integrated employment of various capabilities to affect decisions. So, the focus of IO, by definition, is on decision-making and since decisions are based on available information, the IO goal becomes one of *doing something* to information in order to help cause decisions favorable to one’s own objectives. It should be kept in mind that there is an offensive (...adversarial...) and defensive (...while protecting our own...) component to the definition. This makes the *management* of one’s own information as important as disrupting the information management of the enemy.² To achieve this, Perception Management is vital. The overall Information Operations conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 2.

² Unpublished notes of Steven Iatrou LCDR, USN (Ret.), Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey.

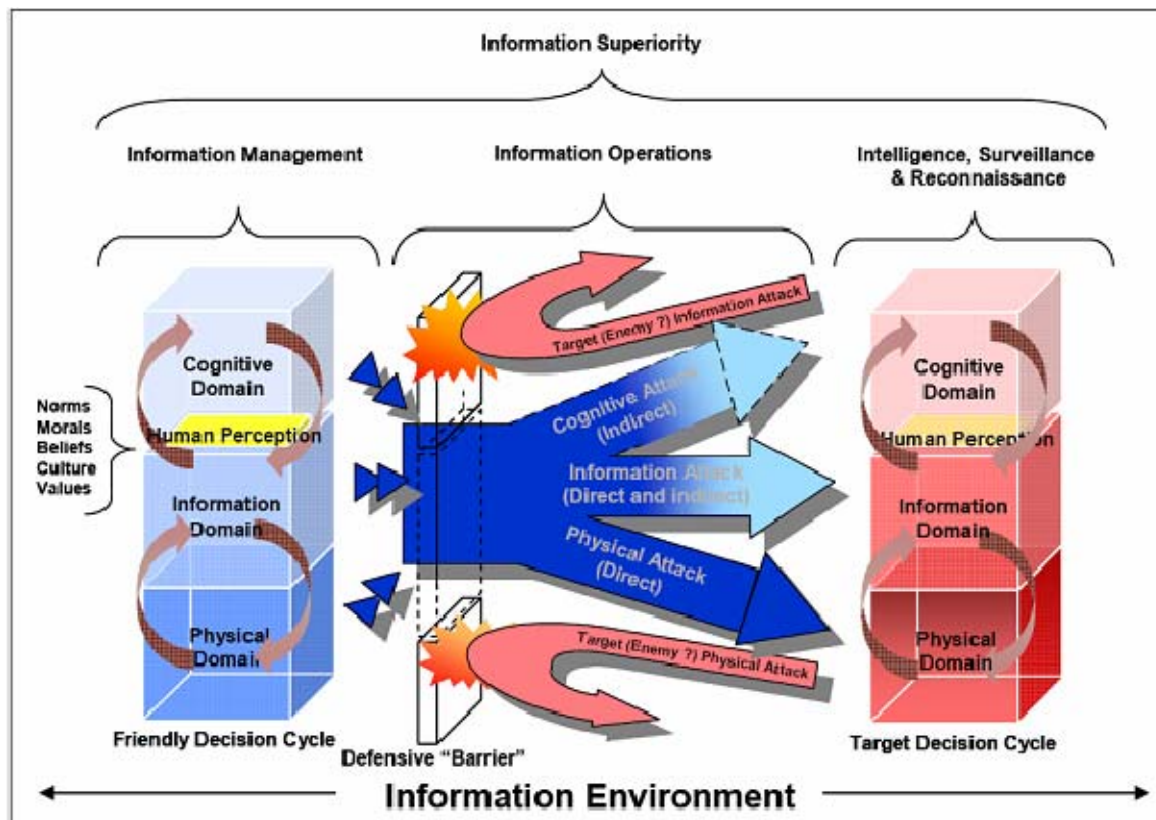


Figure 2. Information Operations Conceptual Framework (After: Information Operations Primer, U.S. Army War College, January 2006)

C. IO EFFECTS

Success in military operations depends on collecting and integrating essential information while denying it to the adversary and other target audiences. According to JP 3-13, IO can affect data, information, and knowledge in three basic ways:

- By taking specific psychological, electronic, or physical actions that add, modify, or remove information from the environment of various individuals or groups of decision makers.
- By taking actions to affect the infrastructure that collects, communicates, processes, and/or stores information in support of targeted decision makers.
- By influencing the way people receive, process, interpret, and use data, information, and knowledge.

D. EMPLOYMENT OF IO

All IO capabilities may be employed in both offensive and defensive operations. Commanders use IO capabilities in both areas of operation simultaneously to accomplish the mission, increase their force effectiveness, and to protect their organizations and systems. Fully integrating IO capabilities for offensive and defensive operations requires planners to treat IO as a single function. Commanders can use IO capabilities, as outlined in JP 3-13, to accomplish the following:

- **Destroy.** To damage a system or entity so badly that it cannot perform any function or be restored to a usable condition without being entirely rebuilt.
- **Disrupt.** To break or interrupt the flow of information.
- **Degrade.** To reduce the effectiveness or efficiency of adversary C2 or communications systems, and information collection efforts or means. IO can, also, degrade the morale of a unit, reduce the target's worth or value, or reduce the quality of adversary decisions and actions.
- **Deny.** To prevent the adversary from accessing and using critical information, systems, and services.
- **Deceive.** To cause a person to believe what is not true. Military Deception (MILDEC) seeks to mislead adversary decision makers by manipulating their perception of reality.
- **Exploit.** To gain access to adversary C2 systems to collect information or to plant false or misleading information.
- **Influence.** To cause others to behave in a manner favorable to own forces.
- **Protect.** To take action to guard against espionage or capture of sensitive equipment and information.
- **Detect.** To discover or discern the existence, presence, or fact of an intrusion into information systems.
- **Restore.** To bring information and information systems back to their original state.
- **Respond.** To react quickly to an adversary's or others' IO attack or intrusion.

E. CORE IO CAPABILITIES

The IO core capabilities, as outlined in JP 3-13, are: Psychological Operations (PSYOP), Military Deception (MILDEC), Operations Security (OPSEC), Electronic Warfare (EW), and Computer Network Operations (CNO).

1. Psychological Operations (PSYOP)

PSYOP are planned operations to convey selected truthful or untruthful information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and, ultimately, the behavior of their governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of PSYOP is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives.³

2. Military Deception (MILDEC)

MILDEC is described as being those actions executed to deliberately mislead adversary decision makers as to friendly military capabilities, intentions, and operations, thereby causing the adversary to take specific actions (or inactions) that will contribute to the accomplishment of the friendly forces' mission. MILDEC seeks to encourage incorrect analysis, causing the adversary to arrive at specific false deductions. To be effective, a MILDEC operation must be susceptible to adversary collection systems and "seen" as credible to the enemy.⁴

3. Operations Security (OPSEC)

OPSEC is a process of identifying critical information and, subsequently, analyzing friendly actions and other activities. The purposes are to identify what friendly information is necessary for the adversary to have sufficiently accurate knowledge of friendly forces and intentions; deny adversary decision makers critical information about friendly forces and intentions; and to cause adversary decision makers to misjudge the relevance of known critical friendly information

³ For more details on PSYOP, see Joint Publication (JP) 3-53, Joint Doctrine for Psychological Operations.

⁴ For more details on MILDEC, see JP 3-58, Joint Doctrine for Military Deception.

(because other information about friendly forces and intentions remains secure). OPSEC seeks to deny real information to an adversary, and to prevent correct deduction of friendly plans.⁵

4. Electronic Warfare (EW)

EW refers to any military action involving the use of electromagnetic (EM) and directed energy to control the EM spectrum or to attack the adversary. EW includes three major subdivisions: electronic attack (EA), electronic protection (EP), and electronic warfare support (ES).⁶

5. Computer Network Operations (CNO)

CNO stems from the increasing use of networked computers and supporting IT infrastructure systems both by military and civilian organizations. For the purpose of military operations, CNO are divided into Computer Network Attack (CNA), Computer Network Defense (CND), and related Computer Network Exploitation (CNE), enabling operations.⁷

F. SUPPORTING IO CAPABILITIES

According to JP 3-13, there are five supporting IO capabilities: Information Assurance (IA), physical security, physical attack, Counterintelligence (CI), and Combat Camera (COMCAM).

1. Information Assurance (IA)

IA is defined as measures that protect and defend information and information systems by ensuring their availability, integrity, authentication, confidentiality, and non-repudiation. This includes providing for restoration of

⁵ For more detail on OPSEC, see JP 3-54, Operations Security.

⁶ For more detail on EW, see JP 3-51, Joint Doctrine for Electronic Warfare.

⁷ The doctrinal use of CNO capabilities in support of IO is discussed further in Appendix A, "Supplemental Guidance," to JP 3-13.

information systems by incorporating protection, detection, and reaction capabilities. IA is necessary to gain and maintain information superiority.⁸

2. Physical Security

Physical security is that part of security concerned with physical measures designed to safeguard personnel, to prevent unauthorized access to equipment, installations, material, and documents, and to safeguard them against espionage, sabotage, damage, and theft. The physical security process includes determining vulnerabilities to known threats, applying appropriate deterrent, control and denial safeguarding techniques and measures, and responding to changing conditions.⁹

3. Physical Attack (Kinetic)

Physical attack disrupts, damages, or destroys adversary targets through destructive power. Physical attack can, also, be used to create or alter adversary perceptions or drive an adversary to use certain exploitable information systems.

4. Counterintelligence (CI)

CI consists of information gathered and activities conducted to protect against espionage, other intelligence activities, sabotage, or assassinations conducted by or on behalf of foreign governments or elements, organizations, persons, or international terrorist activities.

5. Combat Camera (COMCAM)

The COMCAM provides an imagery capability in support of operational and planning requirements across the range of military operations. COMCAM is responsible for rapid development and dissemination of products that support strategic and operational IO objectives.

⁸ For detailed policy guidance, see *DOD Directive (DODD) 8500.1*, Information Assurance (IA), *DOD Instruction (DODI) 8500.2*, Information Assurance (IA) Implementation.

⁹ For more discussion on physical security, see *JP 3-07.2*, Antiterrorism.

G. RELATED IO CAPABILITIES

There are three related IO capabilities, as outlined in JP 3-13: Public Affairs (PA), Civil-Military Operations (CMO), and Defense Support to Public Diplomacy (DSPD).

1. Public Affairs (PA)

PA includes public information, command information, and community relations activities directed toward both external and internal audiences with interest in Department of Defense (DOD). PA is essential for information superiority, and credible PA operations are necessary to support the commander's mission and to maintain essential public liaisons.¹⁰

2. Civil-Military Operations (CMO)

CMO are the activities of a commander that establish, maintain, influence, or exploit relations between military forces, governmental and nongovernmental civilian organizations and authorities, and the civilian populace. They are conducted across the range of military operations to address root causes of instability, assist in reconstruction after conflict or disaster, or may be conducted independent of other military operations to support national security objectives. CMO can occur in friendly, neutral, or hostile operational areas to facilitate military operations and to achieve objectives.¹¹

3. Defense Support to Public Diplomacy (DSPD)

DSPD consists of activities and measures taken by DOD components, not solely in the area of IO, but to support and facilitate public diplomacy efforts of the government.¹²

The IO capabilities are summarized in Figure 3.

¹⁰ For more details on PA, see JP 3-61, Public Affairs.

¹¹ For more details on CMO, see JP 3-57, Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Operations.

¹² For more details on DSPD, see DODD 3600.1, Information Operations (IO).

<u>CORE CAPABILITIES</u>	
Electronic Warfare Computer Network Operations Operations Security	Military Deception Psychological Operations
<u>SUPPORTING CAPABILITIES</u>	<u>RELATED CAPABILITIES</u>
Information Assurance Physical Security Counterintelligence Physical Attack Combat Camera	Public Affairs Civil-Military Operations Defense Support to Public Diplomacy

Figure 3. IO Capabilities

IO is normally performed by military forces at both the operational and tactical levels. IO at the strategic level is a critical component of strategic communication. An additional distinction, which may be helpful, is to further categorize the IO capabilities into those which are primarily “influential” in nature or “Soft Power” (MILDEP, PSYOP, PA, CMO, DSPD) and those which are more “technical (or electronic)” in nature (EW and CNO, etc.). Some distinctions are helpful “conceptually” while still appreciating the fact that the real power of IO comes from their integrated application.

Having discussed IO and its various capabilities, based on existing U.S. doctrine, it is now pertinent to understand the concept of Perception Management (PM).

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III. PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT (PM)

A. INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION

In today's information age, Perception Management (PM) is widely practiced and has become an increasingly important tool of warfare and peacemaking. It is important to first understand the term *perception*. Callamari and Reveron argue that according to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) definition,

Perception, the process of forming images of the world, can be thought of as involving two sub-processes. Sensory data is first acquired, then [it is] organized and analyzed to form a coherent, comprehensive picture. Thus, misperception of the world can arise either from incorrect data, or from mal-processing of correct data.¹³

The subsequent question then is what does Perception Management entail? Joint Publication 1-02 (Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms - April 2006) defines Perception Management as follows:

Actions to convey and/or deny selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, and objective reasoning as well as to intelligence systems and leaders at all levels to influence official estimates, ultimately resulting in foreign behaviors and official actions favorable to the originator's objectives. In various ways, Perception Management combines truth projection, operations security, cover and deception, and psychological operations.

Siegel argues that this definition of PM focuses on deliberate actions to influence rather than the totality of one's activities and others' perceptions of you in terms of influencing their views. A critical part of PM is efforts to understand others' perceptions and basis for those perceptions. The same could be used to effect the Perception Management planning process.¹⁴

¹³ Central Intelligence Agency Office of Research and Development, *Misperception Literature Survey* (Princeton, NJ: Mathtech, 1979), p. 5.

¹⁴ Pascale Combelles Siegel, *Perception Management: IO's Stepchild?* Accessed 20 April 2007. Available <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a727554648~db=all>.

Perception Management deals primarily with the international political environment. It is significant across the conflict spectrum from peacetime to and beyond the outbreak of hostilities. PM is a vital dimension for resolving crisis situations and could immensely change the outcomes of “Low Intensity Conflicts”, such as the Kargil Conflict. Many peace operations commanders have emphasized the role of information as a non-lethal weapons system. Finally, PM is a crucial tool in combat missions.¹⁵ It must be born in mind that the target audience is, also, responsible for interpretation of the false / inaccurate data, and is, thus, an unaware participant in Perception Management. As will be shown in the later part of this thesis, this was the case with the West during the 1999 Indo-Pak Kargil Conflict. As a wartime use example, propaganda efforts (influence operations) during World War II were critical to lowering the morale of Japanese forces. During Desert Storm, the U.S. Central Command’s press briefings played a key role in conveying messages to Saddam Hussein and his high echelon, while PSYOP operations led more than 80,000 soldiers to surrender without shooting at U.S. forces.¹⁶ When employed during peacetime, Perception Management does not have to employ deceitful information. Its purpose is to influence the opinions of a country’s high ranking officials through a long-term and complex manipulative process. The goal is often to improve an image or to deter a conflict.¹⁷ Perception Management is focused on influencing the highest levels of an adversary’s government and/or the general public. This encompasses much more than trying to deceive the enemy with camouflage or false signals intelligence during a military deception operation. Aforesaid in view, even greater preparation must be undertaken during a Perception Management offensive. O’Neill has summarized the key requirements of PM effort:

¹⁵ Pascale Combelles Siegel, *Perception Management: IO’s Stepchild?* Accessed 20 April 2007. Available <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a727554648~db=all>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Peter Callamari and Derek Reveron, *China’s Use of Perception Management*. Accessed 04 May 2007. Available <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a713830380~db=all>.

Knowledge of the adversary's capabilities is important, but his decision-making process, psychological mindset, culture, history, and leadership must be understood in order to be effective.¹⁸

B. PILLARS OF PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT

Perception Management is, in fact, *influence operations* designed to persuade adversaries into a favored course of action. This may be achieved through the threat and/or use of force and/or political and international pressure. The use of force aims to convince adversaries, or third parties, to act in accordance with self / national interests and goals. For example, while the nuclear weapons dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki destroyed much Japanese infrastructure, the U.S. motive was to induce the Japanese to surrender – which they achieved. From the tactical to overall strategic environments, PM lies at the core of military activities. However, not their command processes. In this environment, legitimacy and credibility are the key pillars.¹⁹

1. Legitimacy

If the target audience, both domestic and international in particular, is not convinced that the operation is fully justified, their support will slowly wear away, perhaps to the point of undermining the sustainability of commitment. In twenty-first century warfare, legitimacy is perhaps the king pin. Within domestic and non-adversary audiences, true legitimacy is the perception of an appropriate legal, moral, and ethical basis combined often with a belief in the necessity of responding militarily. Siegel emphasizes that legitimacy stems from the mandate, the respect for the law of war, and regard for humanitarian principles. Legitimacy is a key pillar because it sustains popular support and will to fight, without which democracies cannot sustain military action. It must, also, be born in mind that in certain scenarios, as was the case in the Kargil Conflict, successful Perception

¹⁸ Richard O'Neill, "Toward a Methodology for Perception Management," Defense Technical Information Center (Newport, RI: The United States Naval War College, June 1989), p. 15.

¹⁹ Pascale Combelles Siegel, *Perception Management: IO's Stepchild?* Accessed 20 April 2007. Available <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a727554648~db=all>.

Management effort (as done by the Indians), with almost no counter-effort, can lead to forming legitimacy with both domestic and international audiences.

2. Credibility

While legitimacy is a critical foundation to maintaining an operation and mustering support for it, credibility, within both friendly and hostile audiences, is the second important pillar of PM. Adversaries must believe that the country has both the capability and will to act (i.e., they can match their words with actions.) For this reason, their perceptions must be managed.

C. VULNERABILITY FACTORS

Having discussed the definition of PM, its importance and the key pillars, the matter that merits discussion here is why, in today's information world, where the world has transformed into a global village, are the societies more vulnerable to manipulation. This emphasizes the need for PM to yet another level. Siegel argues that this vulnerability is owing to the following factors.²⁰

1. Worldwide Media Reach

Media operate on a worldwide basis and information is exchanged in real-time. The media reach has changed and it is now more pervasive and fast. Broadcasts are no longer confined to traditionally local audiences and media channels equally aim at the international audiences. Satellite, cable, and Internet provide worldwide broadcast reach for any media outlet. The worldwide media reach ensures that events taking place virtually anywhere can get propagated instantaneously and have global impact.

2. Incessant News Cycle and 24/7 News Reporting

With the immense advancements in technology, the news cycle has been redefined. Between cable and the Internet, and all-news television and radio stations, the news is constantly being aired and there is tremendous *information-*

²⁰ Pascale Combelles Siegel, *Perception Management: IO's Stepchild?* Accessed 20 April 2007. Available <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a727554648~db=all>.

space to be filled. In the search for breaking news and competitive business advantage, the preference is towards taking the lead at airing the news first. Thus, standards for verifying *facts* all too often fall to the wayside. With little breaking *news* to report, media outlets turn to *experts* to fill in open time. The real-time reporting and commentaries are accorded more importance.

3. Real-time Information

With the big boom of media outlets all over the world, especially privately owned news channels and their around-the clock operations, along with the availability of Internet, the news cycle has become a constant stream of information. The twenty-first century news business is real-time. The pressures of competition and the need to fill an ever-expanding information space means that increasingly “being first matters more than being right.” Most of the time, the priority is getting the news out rather than verification, and, sometimes, the evident biases are ignored. This was demonstrated during the Kargil Conflict where the Western media based their reporting on what was being reported by the Indian media. In that context, rumors, half-truths, and unchecked information quickly become news. This, also, places intense pressure on officials to react to stories before they know all the facts.

4. Inexpensive and Easy News Creation / Acquisition of Images

The creation of news reporting / acquisition of images is, these days, a very cheap and trouble-free task. Under the right set of circumstances, aired at the right time, a low-quality, raw, but newsworthy video can have a surprising effect and bring about strong public reaction influencing the leaders to make critical decisions. The October 1993 video of an angry Somali crowd dragging the body of an American serviceman in the streets of Mogadishu, perhaps more than the battle itself and the U.S. casualties, put Somalia on top of the political agenda in Washington. Similarly, the posting of pictures from Abu-Ghraib prison on the Internet gave the U.S. higher-echelon sleepless nights. The U.S. had to do lot of damage control. These days, all it takes is the posting of a raw video from a cell

phone, or an audio message or statement on a host web site to make claims for some terrorist attack anywhere in the world, and the message gets picked up by the electronic media and is propagated globally within hours, if not minutes.

5. The Internet

The Internet as a carrier compounds these effects. It has created a space where information can be easily disseminated and acted on. On the Internet, information takes a life of its own. The information being uploaded needs not to be true, and false information lingers and lives on.

In today's environment, these developments create tremendous challenges for Perception Management efforts. Adversaries have near instantaneous access to audiences at an incredible low cost. The structure of the media environment and democratic institutions can make it easier for adversaries to access and influence worldwide reporting. For developing countries, these vulnerabilities mentioned above, especially the media tool, can be highly useful and, with not much associated cost, to mount a successful perception management effort.

D. PRINCIPLES / TENETS OF PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT

Callamari and Reveron have noted that, when designing a Perception Management effort, certain deception principles, or tenets, apply.²¹ These are enumerated in the ensuing paragraphs:

1. Manipulating Preexisting Belief

According to the *first* principle, manipulating an opponent's preexisting belief is easier than presenting false evidence in attempting to change it. Applying this to Perception Management, the cognitive biases which play a vital role in what a person notices and how he interprets it, seem to be highly dependent on what the person expects to find. Concerning international

²¹ Peter Callamari and Derek Reveron, *China's Use of Perception Management*. Accessed 4 May 2007. Available <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a713830380~db=all>.

relationships, the beliefs or existing opinions of the international community are often highly difficult to sway. Thus, designing the effort around this principle would be more advantageous.

2. Conditioning

The *second* principle relates to the concept of conditioning (i.e., manipulating an opponent's perception by presenting information bit-by-bit and this is far more effective than doing so all at once). An adversary, or the target audience, is highly likely to dismiss blunt offerings, especially when they are inconsistent with its existing beliefs and already formed opinions. On the other hand, gradual but small changes, even if ambiguous in nature, are more likely to be accepted by an opponent in ultimately altering / managing its perception over time.

3. Utilization of Truth

The *third* principle of Perception Management entails the utilization of as much truthful / legitimate information as possible. By reducing the potential conflict with factual information, the originator is more likely to influence the opponent. In the end, bits and pieces of truthful information do not necessarily equate a factual representation of the big picture. As a result, the originator has not directly affected the adversary's / third party's cognitive process, but has led him to a desired and possibly erroneous conclusion.

4. Feedback

The *fourth* PM principle reinforces the need for feedback mechanism with any Perception Management effort. These returned responses of information are essential in determining the effectiveness of the effort. They are, also, mandatory for making adjustments as and when required in order to achieve the desired overall objective. This principle is critical for Perception Management efforts because such campaigns last longer and are more likely to require course corrections.

5. Second Order Effects

The *fifth* principle emphasizes that Perception Management planners need to closely monitor the results of their efforts. One needs to be cognizant of any subtle and unwanted second order effects. While all possible ramifications of a Perception Management effort cannot possibly be anticipated, handling unwanted developments as soon as they present themselves is critical and proves most advantageous. The planners must extinguish detrimental second order effects before they develop into more significant problems (i.e., nip-the-evil-in-the-bud).

6. Overall Design

The *final* principle involves the PM effort's overall design. Prior to beginning a Perception Management offensive, the placement and presentation of material needs to be mapped out. With Perception Management, the timing and flow of intended information to the opponent is critical. A sudden "lucky break" concerning available information will always be viewed skeptically by an opponent, and, thus should not be presented in such a manner.

E. PM OBJECTIVES

PM must bring together various command specialties. This includes public affairs, intelligence, psychological operations, civil military operations, defense support to public diplomacy, and some Department of State / Foreign Office specialties, such as public diplomacy, international public information, and international broadcast systems. Siegel asserts that PM seeks the following three major objectives to:²²

- Build and preserve public opinion support (at home and abroad) to gain and maintain legitimacy;
- Communicate desired intent and objectives to hostile and/or third parties to establish a high degree of credibility so they fully understand the consequences of their actions;

²² Pascale Combelles Siegel, *Perception Management: IO's Stepchild?* Accessed 20 April 2007. Available <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a727554648~db=all>.

- Influence the attitudes and behaviors of the local populations so they act in accordance with one's own objectives.

PM must target several audiences. Domestic audiences require information about an operation's legitimacy, risks and benefits, notwithstanding the fact that, without public support, democracies cannot sustain military engagement. Meanwhile, adversaries' and third-party perceptions must be managed so that they re-order their priorities and strategies in accordance with the originator's goals and objectives. Achieving both goals, in outright war fighting (or operations other than war), is fostered by active Perception Management efforts.

F. PM TOOLS

The ability to create situation awareness is a key factor of control and success in warfare. This has been aptly demonstrated during recent modern conflicts. One could describe modern war as the battle of trust, and, in a battle of trust, the endeavor is to control the truth. The traditional concepts of Information Operations assume that there is one truth and that IO is about manipulating the ability to see the true picture of the situation. Perception warfare is not about damaging the truth; rather, it is about creating the truth. In both perspectives, truth is the victim.²³

The Perception Management process, also referred to as Influence Operations, may well be yet another pseudonym for propaganda. Taylor while laying out PM Tools, asserts that:²⁴

[Perception Management] ... needs to embrace a number of established communication practices, including public diplomacy (and private diplomacy), media relations (known as Public Information in Europe, and as Public Affairs in the U.S.), PSYOP and even the exercise of Soft Power such as cultural and educational relations. These are the areas in which the ability to convince others of "truth", whether by short-term activity such as

²³ Henrik Friman, *Perception Warfare: a perspective for the future*. Accessed 29 May 2007. Available [http://www.militaryscience.org/public/media/publications/Friman\(1999\)PW.PDF](http://www.militaryscience.org/public/media/publications/Friman(1999)PW.PDF).

²⁴ P. M. Taylor, *Perception Management and the 'War' Against Terrorism*. Accessed 10 June 2007. Available <http://www.terrorismresearch.net/docs/taylor.pdf>.

radio broadcasting, Internet, print media or press conferences, or by longer-term work in the areas of educational and cultural activity, depends critically upon the credibility of the information source. That credibility, as we have seen through our historical examples, very much depends upon the willingness of the target audience (whether it be individuals, specific groups or entire populations) to believe what they are being told.

The growing use of media (electronic and print) as a primary tool for PM efforts, especially in the context of Pakistan-India scenario, as was demonstrated during the 1999 Kargil conflict, will be discussed in Chapter V.

G. PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS

There is no denying the fact that perceptions can be managed. In fact, some societies are more susceptible than others to manipulation via the Perception Management offensive. The beauty of a Perception Management effort is that it is a *soft* tool. According to O'Neill,²⁵

[Perception Management] ... need not cost large sums of scarce fiscal resources to be effective. And, even if it is unsuccessful, it is likely to go undetected, leaving a clean image in international relations.

Contrary to strategic military deception; Perception Management is more systematic, leading an adversary to more slowly implement changes favorable to the originator. This effort can include the manipulation of an opponent's perception through an attempt at influencing its decision making. This is accomplished by either showing a false situation or creating a goal that would support the originator's objective.

Callamari and Reveron, while outlining the PM Process,²⁶ argue that when designing a Perception Management offensive, the first step is to establish a strategic goal. After establishing an objective(s), the user must research and know the opponent. The originator must have a clear and accurate

²⁵ Richard O'Neill, "Toward a Methodology for Perception Management," Defense Technical Information Center (Newport, RI: The United States Naval War College, June 1989), p. 32.

²⁶ Peter Callamari and Derek Reveron, *China's Use of Perception Management*. Accessed 4 May 2007. Available <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a713830380~db=all>.

understanding of an adversary's decision making process, as well as its culture, beliefs, and history. It is important that Perception Management planners must be cautious enough not to treat all targets the same. Various cultures react differently in different situations. In addition, in order to have a successful Perception Management effort, the originator must be cognizant of the target's frame of reference. Senior officials are often slow to change their opinion, and often place more stock in their own personal observations because they have well-developed sets of beliefs.

The next step is to design the Perception Management effort and decide how best to influence the adversary. During this stage the possibility for the PM effort to be discovered needs to be measured. This step should be taken while always remembering that such actions need to be grounded in fact. After designing, and then implementing the campaign, feedback mechanisms need to be established in order to make an assessment on the effectiveness of the effort. Such feedback will allow the originator to make adjustments accordingly, pull back if necessary, and to protect from counter-Perception Management efforts by the opponent.

Callamari and Reveron argue that, at a minimum, Perception Management includes four steps:²⁷

- (1) Getting the target's attention;
- (2) Presenting relevant information to hold the target's attention;
- (3) Portraying the information in a way consistent with the target's memory or experiences; and
- (4) Repeatedly communicating the information to remain congruent and to avoid the ploy from being discovered by the target.

In addition to the above, it is paramount that the information should be timely.

²⁷ Callamari and Reveron.

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IV. MEDIA AND PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT

Attaining 100 victories in 100 battles is not the pinnacle of excellence. Subjugating an enemy's army without fighting is the true pinnacle of excellence.

Sun Tzu

As noted, the modern era is an age of communication revolution; after the Second World War, which divided the world into two ideological blocks, propaganda techniques acquired a great importance. Today, all nations are busy day and night in projecting their point of view, and in trying to convince others about their merits. In this world of conflicting ideas, nations are busy waging a constant war of words. The revolution in information technology, communications, as well as the revolutionary changes in the employment of air power, have not only profoundly influenced analysts and planners, but have, also, completely changed the conduct of war.

The two Gulf Wars afforded the world its first glimpse of the future of warfare. Millions around the globe were treated to images of precision-guided bombs annihilating targets in downtown Baghdad. They, also, learned of satellite uplinks from the battle field that provided real-time connectivity, and were awed by the ability of stealth aircraft to ensure aerial dominance. As Hali noted, everyone seemed to understand that something was different about this "Video Game War." There was much more to this spectacle than the ones provided by previous wars.

When it comes to India and Pakistan, the former has grown great bounds in acquiring this power and has been putting it to good use for her benefits. With a number of satellite television channels and remarkable advancement in IT, India has attained considerable media supremacy over Pakistan. Indians are

making very effective use of any media to which they have access. India's use of the media to mislead its own people, both during the Kargil crisis²⁸ in 1999 and, thereafter, in the 2002 Indo-Pak stand-off, are key examples.

The important thing to note is that the revolutions in the field of information technology have caused the media to have a much greater impact on operations. Thus, it is imperative to understand the role of media in future conflicts. This chapter reflects upon media resources of India, its media strengths, and its designs. It is pertinent to make a mention of what are media, how it relates to information war, its objectives and the desired effects.

A. WHAT ARE MEDIA?

Media are the medium by virtue of which the thoughts, feelings, ideas, concepts, and information are conveyed to the masses. Media play a vital role in society as it disseminates information, molds, and shapes public opinion. The reason is simply because this is the age of communication explosion and information revolution. The media are a key element in the implementation of a Perception Management effort.

Media are pre-eminently a democratic instrument, fashioned to dominate the mass minds and general will of complete nations or societies. In this thesis, the term media refers to two *types* of media:

- **Electronic Media.** It includes television, satellite, computer / Internet, film, and radio.
- **Print Media.** It includes newspapers, magazines, and books.

Media have three societal roles:

- As a watchman, to provide information about happenings and events.
- As the contributor to the decision making process, to provide the material necessary for a dialogue on certain issues.

²⁸ Sultan M. Hali, "The Role of Media in War," PR Society of Indonesia. Accessed 20 June 2007. Available <http://www.pr-society.or.id/artikel4.asp>.

- As a modifier of attitude during the process of decision making, the media should modify attitude preferences and actions in the desired direction.

The media gathers information from various sources which are broadly categorized as Overt and Covert. These are enumerated below:

- Overt Sources:
 - Press briefings
 - Press releases/handouts
 - Staged observation (e.g., supervised visit/tour of battle area)
- Covert Sources:
 - Surreptitious human contact
 - Electronic eaves dropping
 - Sub-rosa observation (e.g., clandestine visits to battle areas)

B. THE MEDIA AND INFORMATION WAR

It is now widely discussed that information forms the fifth dimension of war along with land, space, sea and air; though Information Operations have many dimensions. Since information is now a valuable resource, its dissemination through the media has important bearing on national and international security.

The media are no longer a simple observer of war; rather, it is an actual participant within it and, thus, is a “legitimate target.” Whereas, in the deceptively named World War II strategic bombing campaign against Nazi Germany, the primary targets were weapon factories and shipyards. Today, the largely accurately labeled precision-guided weaponry is directed at power stations, television and radio transmitters, and telephone exchanges. In fact, since the two Gulf Wars, the relationship between the media and security, or how the media can be used in waging information war, has become an exciting area of research. The Gulf Wars showed how information could be used both as a military target and as a weapon. In the recent Gulf War, the allies bombed Al-Jazeera TV

station in Baghdad and, in the Kosovo conflict of 1999, NATO bombed the Belgrade TV station, justifying it as a military target.²⁹

Military-media relations are entering into a new era. Media and communication technologies are increasingly used by different governments to attain their foreign policy objectives. Moreover, the all-pervasive nature of communication technologies has not allowed governments to impose tight control on information flow as previously. This has resulted in the use of these technologies by a variety of different and unofficial ethno-religious or dissatisfied groups in a society to achieve their divergent objectives.³⁰

C. MEDIA OBJECTIVES

When using media for Perception Management, the intent is to achieve the following *objectives*:

- **Stimulates the Mass Mentality on the Home Front.** It is accomplished by awakening tribal instinct latent in man. These instincts are focused in order to transform the enemy into an evil entity. Allied propaganda against Hitler and, more recently against Saddam Hussein, are examples. The potential audiences are primarily one's own public.
- **Wins the Support of Neutral Nations.** In this dimension, through carefully managed control, media aims to win the support of neutrals. In both World Wars, the British did this successfully. Similarly, in the recent past, during the 1999 Kargil Conflict, the Indian media created so much hype aimed at the West using its media propaganda, that they were able to win substantial political support. Eventually the Pakistani forces, though tactically at an advantage by taking forward defensive positions, had to withdraw in the face of immense international pressure. This was helped partly by the absence of Perception Management efforts by Pakistan.
- **Targets the Mass Mind on the Inner Front of a Hostile Nation.** This aims at defeating the adversary psychologically by subverting their public and defense forces and, also, disarming them morally.

²⁹ Jim Naureckas, *Legitimate Targets? How U.S. Media Supported War Crimes in Yugoslavia*. Accessed 22 May 2007. Available <http://www.fair.org/extra/9907/kosovo-crimes.html>.

³⁰ Md Shamsul Islam, "Media's Role in South Asian Security: A Case Study," *Regional Studies*, Autumn 2001.

D. TARGET AUDIENCE AND DESIRED EFFECTS

Broadly speaking, in terms of the Indo-Pak context, there are basically two *target audience* groups:

- **Literate People.** Here the support of elite, literate personalities is achieved by appealing to some political, moral, or economic perspective; which, in turn, creates the momentum to win general public support. This class is composed of the following categories of professionals:
 - Educators and writers.
 - Artists and people related to mass media.
 - Policy-makers.
 - Bureaucracy.
 - Religious / ethnic leaders.
- **Masses.** Here the support of the masses is won by exploiting:
 - Religious feelings.
 - Ethnic groups.
 - Occupational groups.

Some *effects* that can be achieved through effective and successful employment of media resources are enumerated below:

- Erodes and undermines the moral resolution and the enemy's ultimate belief in victory.
- Creates mental confusion, contradictory feeling, indecisiveness, panic, fear, and discontentment.
- Undermines the patriotism and sentiments of the people.
- Targets the basic ideology.
- Reduces trust in leadership.
- Encourages partisan feelings.
- Encourages social and political revolutions.
- Wins support of neutral nations.

E. MEDIA RESOURCES OF INDIA

The media has grown considerably in the last few decades to include print media, TV channels, radio, Internet, and others. While India and Pakistan both

have a diverse mix of different kinds of media, there is a predominance of print media in terms of size and numbers. In India alone, as of 31 March 2006, there were 62,483 registered newspapers.³¹ Out of these, the number of dailies being published in the country was 2130. The majority of Indian newspapers were periodicals. In addition, the available data shows 3428 were weeklies, 955 fortnightlies, 1471 monthlies, 219 quarterlies, 49 annuals, and 221 other periodicities.

F. INDIAN MEDIA STRENGTHS

Indian media, particularly electronic media, enjoys relative credibility and popularity all over the world. Some of the strengths of Indian media are:

- A well developed media infrastructure.
- Global reach through satellite channels.
- Cutting-edge Information Technology.
- Popularity at international level, mainly due to the attractions of a colorful cultural heritage, and a glamorous film industry.
- Credibility built up over a long span of time.

G. INDIAN DESIGNS

Having mentioned the strengths of Indian media, it is pertinent to mention the long term designs of Indian media - at least as can be discerned through observation:

- Endeavors to predispose the masses of target countries favorably towards India. Desired messages are conveyed innocently under the garb of entertainment and utility programs.
- Strives to establish a balanced and accepted credibility in news and views by using extensive satellite transmissions.
- Desires to ultimately provide the satellite media as a regional network catering to the needs of all those who reside in South Asia.
- As a state policy, aims to project Pakistan as a state abetting terrorism and to isolate Pakistan both regionally and internationally.

³¹ Registrar of Newspapers for India. Accessed 10 June 2007. Available <https://rni.nic.in/pii.htm>.

- Desires to keep Pakistan socially demoralized, and militarily ineffective.
- Strives to project India as the guardian of regional peace and security in order to gain support for the United Nations Security Council's permanent seat.

Having highlighted the role of media as “the tool” of Perception Management, especially in the South Asian context, it is pertinent to review the vast effects that can be achieved using this vital tool for Perception Management. The next chapter discusses the Kargil conflict as a case in point where Indians successfully used media not only to cover up their tactical failures, but, also, to convert the Kargil episode into a political victory at both the domestic and international levels.

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V. THE 1999 KARGIL CONFLICT

[Disinformation] ... that even now continues to metastasize within academe and the media to such a degree that myth threatens to overthrow history.

Gore Vidal

Successful Indian Perception Management efforts and little or nothing done by Pakistan to counter such efforts allowed Kargil to become “the first (Indian) publicised limited military exchange between Pakistan and India after the nuclearization of South Asia.”³² As only the Indian “one-sided reporting” of Kargil was publicized, the real history of Kargil became obscured. It is a central aim of this thesis to present the Pakistani case, to set the record, if not exactly straight, then to provide a balancing viewpoint through Pakistani eyes.

A. KARGIL CONFLICT - A PAKISTANI PERSPECTIVE

The Kargil Conflict of 1999 was primarily a limited, tactical, defensive operation for Pakistan, linked to a series of events and military exchanges between Pakistan and India along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir since the signing of the Simla Agreement in 1972. As a backup to understanding the Kargil conflict, General Musharraf, the Chief of Army Staff at the time of Kargil Conflict, in his memoir, stressed that:

Kargil was not a one-off operation, but the latest in a series of moves and countermoves at a tactical level by India and Pakistan along the Line of Control in the inaccessible, snowbound northern areas. India would capture a location where they felt that our [Pakistani] presence was thin, and vice-versa. This is how they [Indian Army] managed to occupy Siachen (ostensibly without clearance from the Indian government). This is how the Kashmiri freedom fighting Mujahideen occupied the Kargil heights that the Indian army had vacated for the winter.³³

³² Shireen M. Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999: Separating Fact from Fiction* (Islamabad: Ferozsons, 2004). p. 15.

³³ Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire – A Memoir* (New York: Free Press, 2006), p. 87.

Pakistan feels deeply wronged by an India that exploited an internal crisis in Eastern Pakistan, captured the Siachen glacier (Operation *Meghdoot*) despite the 1972 Simla agreement, planned a pre-emptive attack on Pakistan's nuclear facilities in the garb of the 1987 Brasstacks exercise, and suppressed the Kashmiri people for decades.³⁴ Pakistanis always have had great difficulty in comprehending why the international community allowed India to get away with these perceived injustices.

Pakistan's sense of historical grievances, fueled especially by the 1971 Bangladesh war, India's 1984 occupation of the Siachen glacier, and a series of subsequent incursions and skirmishes along the northern LoC, raised the concerns and fears of yet another Indian aggression in 1999 in the northern areas. Therefore, Pakistani forces took a "forward defense posture across the LoC" at a time when Kashmiri Mujahideen had occupied vacated Indian winter positions to settle scores with Indians and draw them away from the Indian Occupied Kashmir.

B. A HISTORY OF INJUSTICES

Pakistanis believe that the status quo in Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir is illegitimate. The outcome of the partition of British India in 1947 was neither fair nor just. The border drawn by the Radcliffe commission was controversial, the division of civil and military assets inequitable, and, most importantly, the accession of princely states³⁵ were deemed improper. The most glaring injustice

³⁴ For a comprehensive elaboration of these views, see Javed Hassan, *India: A Study in Profile* (Rawalpindi: Army Education Press, GHQ, 1990). See, also, Stephen Philip Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), pp. 102-110.

³⁵ The British ruled India with two administrative systems. One was 'Provinces' and the other 'Princely States'. About 60% of the Indian sub-continent's territories were Provinces and 40% were Princely States. Provinces were British territories completely under British control. Princely States were states in British India with a local ruler or king with an honorary title, such as Maharaja, Raja, Maharani, Rana, Nizam, Badshah, and other such titles (meaning king or ruler in different Indian languages). These rulers were subjected to the British Empire. These two types of administrative systems were the result of the British East India Company's attempt to annex the whole of Indian sub-continent and make it into a British territory. When the British gave the Indian sub-continent independence in 1947, there were 562 Princely States. Some of them, such as Kashmir, Mysore, and Hyderabad, were as large as England. There were, also, smaller Princely states, such as Junagad, Udaipur, Janjira, Aundh, and Cochin. Accessed 15 June 2007. Available <http://adaniel.tripod.com/princely.htm>.

was created by the incorporation into India of the state of Jammu and Kashmir—a Muslim majority state under a Hindu ruler, or maharaja.³⁶ The Hindu leaders have long oppressed the Muslim population of Jammu and Kashmir and the questionable, forced accession into the Indian Union has denied the populace of their right to self-determination. Pakistanis emphasize the UN Security Council's demand for a "free and impartial plebiscite."³⁷

India's heavy-handed policies over the Kashmiri populace are taken as proof that only through extensive oppression can the Indian state suppress the desire for Kashmiri self-determination. Indian abuses are highlighted in the Pakistani press. Pakistanis, on the streets and in uniform, look across the Line of Control and see a long history of vote rigging, arbitrary arrest, torture, and rape by an occupying Indian force. Many accounts of atrocities by the Indian Security forces in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir have, also, been recorded by the Human Rights Watch, U.S. Department of State, and Amnesty International.³⁸

India supported the insurgency in East Pakistan and, subsequently, intervened militarily into East Pakistan. The garrison was defeated and Pakistan lost its eastern wing in 1971.³⁹ The 1971 war created an indelible imprint on the security thinking in Pakistan. While the war had no direct linkage to Kashmir, Pakistanis believe that India's role in Bangladesh stands as irrefutable proof that India will intervene whenever Pakistan presents any vulnerability—a lesson reinforced by India's occupation of Siachen thirteen years later.

³⁶ Stephen Philip Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), pp. 46-7.

³⁷ Official Records of the UN Security Council, Third Year, 286th Meeting, 21 April 1948 (document S/726). Accessed 25 June 2007. Available http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/repertoire/46-51_08.pdf.

³⁸ See Human Rights Watch Report, *Behind the Kashmir Conflict*. Accessed 5 July 2007. Available <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/kashmir/>. Also, see Bibliography/Reference Links for reports and documents on human rights in India, Accessed 5 July 2007. Available <http://homepages.uc.edu/thro/dilemma/biblio.html>.

³⁹ For background on the Pakistani political crisis and the India-Pakistan war, see Richard Sisson and Leo Rose, *War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

Pakistan and India signed a peace accord at Simla in 1972, normally referred to as Simla Agreement. India emphasizes that Simla commits both countries “to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them.”⁴⁰ Pakistan stresses the non-use of force to resolve conflicts—which India violated in its 1984 occupation of the Siachen glacier—and notes that the agreement explicitly states that it conforms with the “principles and purposes” of the UN Charter, implying that the UN Security resolutions on Kashmir retain their validity.⁴¹

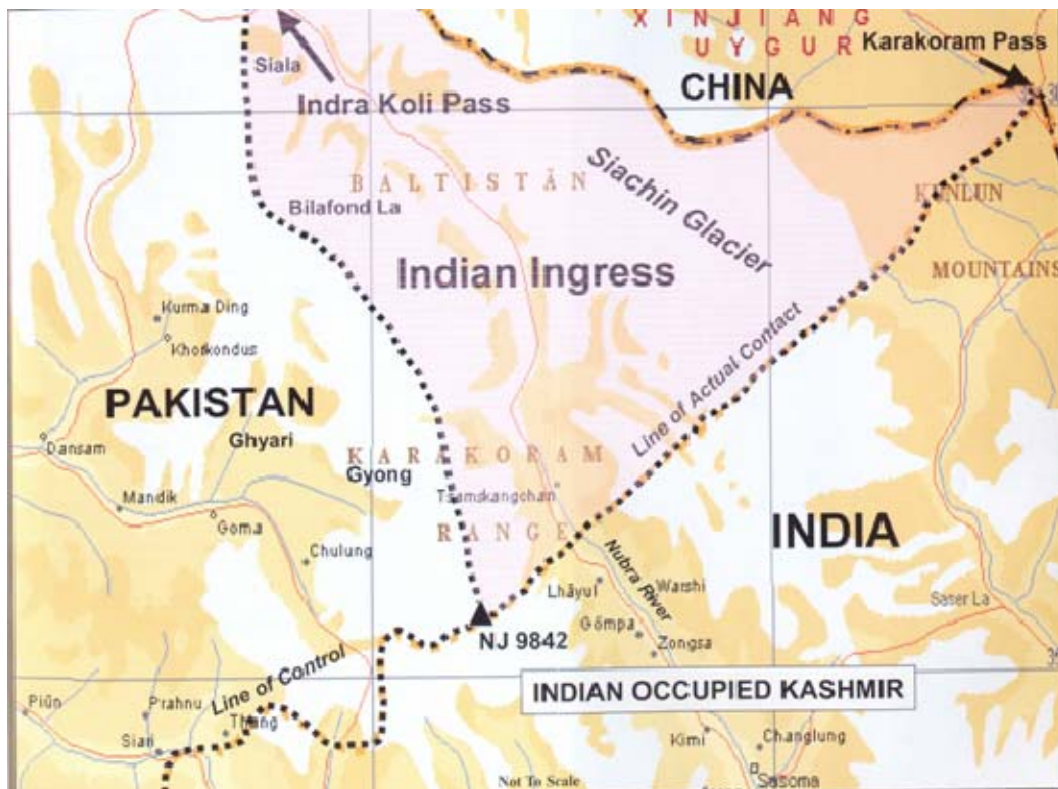


Figure 4. Map of Indian Ingress at the Siachen Glacier as appeared in Shireen Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999: Separating Fact from Fiction* (From: Islamabad: Ferozsons, 2004), p. 12.

⁴⁰ Simla Agreement, 2 July 1972, article 1(ii), Accessed 22 June 2007. Available <http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/Kashmir/shimla.htm>.

⁴¹ Article 1 (vi) and article 1 (i), respectively.

In 1989, Kashmiri political activists and Mujahideen (freedom fighters) staged a mostly indigenous uprising against Indian authorities in response to Indian atrocities. The freedom movement in Kashmir ties down more than 400,000 Indian troops in so called counterinsurgency operations.⁴² Even if a Pakistani government were to shut off all political and moral support to Kashmiri Mujahideen, there is great concern that India would “pocket the concession” and maintain a hard-line against Pakistan. This perception—partially based on strategic logic and partially based in fear and mistrust—further complicates the ability of Pakistan’s leadership to extricate itself from the present Kashmir policy.

All of this provides a larger context to the calculations behind the Kargil operation. This operation, fueled by intelligence reports, can be seen as a logical continuation of Pakistani fears of another Siachen-like Indian operation.

C. THE KASHMIRI MUJAHIDEEN FACTOR AND UNFOLDING OF EVENTS

By 1998, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), with its militarist, *Hindutva*⁴³ creed, was in power. The Indians introduced an increasing number of forces to intensify the suppression of the Kashmiri struggle in Indian-occupied Kashmir. The Kashmiri Mujahideen were hard-pressed in the urban areas of the province. Therefore, in order to regroup and refocus their military struggle and give it a necessary military boost, they dispersed into the mountainous terrain along the

⁴² Mahendra Ved and Rajat Pandit, “Valley Forces Wait and Watch,” *Times of India*, 12 November 2004.

⁴³ *Hindutva* is one of the two main pillars of the BJP's (Bharatiya Janata Party) philosophy. *Hindutva*, or Cultural Nationalism, presents the BJP's conception of Indian nationhood. In the 1998 BJP election manifesto, referred to as the BJP's National Agenda for Governance, the Party's *Hindutva* creed was apparent not only in the national security agenda but, also, in the economic policy guidelines. In the case of the latter, the National Agenda for Governance stated: "We will continue with the reform process, give it a strong Swadeshi thrust to ensure that the national economy grows on the principle that India shall be built by Indians." On the issue of National Security, the Agenda declared: "The state of preparedness, morale and combat effectiveness of the Armed Forces shall receive early attention and appropriate remedial action. We will establish a National Security Council to analyze the military, economic and political threats to the nation, also, to continuously advise the government. This council will undertake India's first ever Strategic Defense Review. To ensure the security, territorial integrity and unity of India we will take all necessary steps and exercise all available options. Towards that end we will re-evaluate the nuclear policy and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons." Accessed 24 June 2007. Available www.bjp.org/philo.htm.

LoC. The intent, also, seemed aimed at diverting the Indian security forces away from the area of the Mujahideen's main focus, the Indian occupied Kashmir Valley. In addition, the targeting of the civilian population by the Indian forces across the Line of Control was pushing the Mujahideen into taking more direct action against the Indian Army around the Kargil area.

For these Mujahideen, the terrain in the north was highly suited for their operations. There were many stretches of inhospitable, unoccupied territory in the Dras-Kargil sector, making detection difficult, and through which across-the-LoC movement of the people of the two sides - the Valley as well as the Northern Areas - used to take place without fear of detection. The Mujahideen were helped by many local volunteers in order to interdict the Indian army in response to the heavy Indian firing across the LoC.

It is to be born in mind that thousands of Mujahideen, mostly indigenous to Indian-held Kashmir, but, also, supported by freelance sympathizers from Pakistan, did operate against the Indian forces. They used to cross the Line of Control in both directions at places which were thinly-held and where the going was rough.

Indian troops predictably vacated posts along the LoC as they retreated to winter positions—a normal measure taken by both Indian and Pakistani forces to reduce the strains on forces during the harsh winter months.⁴⁴ Thus, this opportunity was seized by the Mujahideen to settle scores with the Indians and draw them away from Indian-occupied Kashmir.

⁴⁴ At remote posts in higher altitudes, both Indian and Pakistani forces would retreat to lower heights during the winter to reduce the intense logistical and weather hazards incumbent in deploying troops during such conditions. After the establishment of the Ceasefire Line (and, subsequently, the Line of Control), both India and Pakistan tacitly allowed such winter retreats to occur without attempts to take advantage of them, a norm consistent with the letter and spirit of the Karachi Agreement of 1949. Following the seizure of Siachen glacier by Indian troops in 1984, both sides dramatically reduced the number of forward posts they would vacate during the harsh winter months. For a study of the harsh terrain for military operations in northern areas see, Lt. Gen. V. R. Raghavan, *Siachen: Conflict without End* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2002), pp. 58-85.



Figure 5. Map of the Kargil Conflict Area as appeared in Shireen Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999: Separating Fact from Fiction* (From: Islamabad: Ferozsons, 2004), p. 46.

The Mujahideen plan's boldness, also made it dangerous and, ultimately, untenable. Its success would require Mujahideens to infiltrate across the LoC and to maintain their positions for weeks without being detected. After their inevitable discovery, they would have to hold off Indian counterattacks until the onset of winter. This would close the passes, halt military operations, and allow Mujahideen to harden their positions, and shift the Indian operations away from the Valley.

Once the Mujahideen executed their plan, the number and frequency of reported attacks by Mujahideen on Indian forces became unprecedented. This could have possibly been used by the Indians as a preamble to launch an operation against Pakistan. Pakistani military planners had grown increasingly concerned about India's military build-up in occupied Kashmir and the Mujahideen attacks in Indian forces. The past experience of Indian incursions,

combined with a continuous, gradual increase in Indian forces in the region, along with the wide gaps between Pakistani defensive positions, caused concern for all responsible in the military chain of command.

In the winter of 1998, when India's 70th and 114th Brigade did not return to their original positions in the Kashmir Valley, Pakistani planners became particularly troubled. In their minds, their failure to move toward a "forward defense posture across the LoC" would leave Pakistani positions dangerously vulnerable. Pakistani intelligence reports indicated an increase in Indian forces in the area.⁴⁵ The intelligence indicated that India was once again planning a military move along the LoC in order to tilt the balance in the Kashmir conflict and to move towards a settlement through tactical military gains. Thus, instead of retreating to their normal winter positions, Pakistani forces moved forward into previously unoccupied gaps and positions left vacant by Indian forces during the winter months.

The planners seemed convinced that India would not expand the conflict elsewhere along the LoC or the international border. They were, also, convinced that the international community would view the Kargil incursion as part of the normal pattern of military activity along the LoC, similar to India's occupation of the Siachen glacier fifteen years earlier in 1984. The perceived need for a "forward defense posture," taken in the utmost secrecy, likely compelled the Kargil Pakistani planners to use only the forces that they had readily available. If they had inducted fresh troops, India would have suspected an offensive operation, and Pakistan would have lost surprise. Second line forces under the FCNA, called Northern Light Infantry, composed of locals of the area, despite the difficult terrain and weather conditions, executed the maneuver and occupied the forward positions to deter any Indian countermoves. The troops had special instructions not to cross the watershed along the LoC.

⁴⁵ Mazari, also, has argued that Pakistani planners were worried about an Indian operation against Pakistani positions in the Shaqma sector. Shireen M. Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999: Separating Fact from Fiction* (Islamabad: Ferozsons, 2004), pp. 28-32.

When these developments were discovered, after the initial confrontation and mass Indian casualties, the Indians overreacted by escalating the conflict vertically, militarily, and horizontally, in diplomatic terms. The vertical expansion involved Indian artillery and air force attacks. Moreover, the actions of the Indian Air Force were not confined to the Mujahideen locations. The Indians, also, started crossing over and bombarding positions of the Pakistan Army. This resulted in the shooting down of one of the Indian helicopters and two jet fighter planes over Pakistani territory. The Indians, also, showed no hesitation in attacking Pakistani troops on the LoC on the ground and from the air.

The expansion of the Kargil conflict was partially the result of the initial panic on the Indian side when they discovered the strategic heights which the Mujahideen had occupied. This panic was rather apparent, not only in the amassment of military hardware and troops, but, also in their haste to give military awards as a means of reviving the sagging morale of their soldiers. As a result, they awarded their highest military wartime gallantry award -- the Param Vir Chakra (PVC), posthumously to a soldier, Havildar Yogender Singh Yadav, who was alive and undergoing treatment at the base hospital in Delhi.⁴⁶ The event was an embarrassment for the Indians and they later started coming up with cover stories to down play this *faux pas*.

Pakistani defensive positions held at bay the massive onslaught by Indians operationally equipped for high-altitude conditions. Having failed to dislodge the groups occupying the heights, the Indians resorted to mass attacks with little or no success, managing only to vacate 10-11% of the posts.⁴⁷ The Indian media hyped their success. On the Pakistani side, the political leadership made no serious effort to rally the country.

India's military, political, and diplomatic responses stood out in sharp contrast to a disarrayed Pakistani policymaking. Pakistan's Foreign Office was

⁴⁶ Rediff on the net. Accessed 2 July 2007. Available <http://www.rediff.com/republic/2000/jan/27param.htm>.

⁴⁷ Shireen Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999: Separating Fact from Fiction* (Islamabad: Ferozsons, 2004), p. 63.

not prepared to rebut India's diplomatic maneuvers. The gaps between competing bureaucratic and political entities, also significantly complicated the handling of the Kargil crisis. As Maleeha Lodhi has noted,

The Kargil affair has exposed systematic flaws in a decision-making process that is impulsive, chaotic, erratic, and overly secretive. The elimination of internal checks and balances... yielded a personalized system of governance which delivers hasty decisions, whose consequences are not thought through, and which are predicated on lack of consultation and scrutiny even within the establishment, much less based on public consent.⁴⁸

D. THE POLITICAL CANVAS

The mismanagement of the Kargil operation by the Pakistan government led to Pakistan's diplomatic isolation. Unable to defend and project the Kargil incursion as a logical outcome of Indian policy of territorial aggression against Pakistani-administered part of Siachin, the Nawaz Sharif government let the Indian media distort Islamabad's limited involvement in Kargil as a paradigm case of military invasion of "Indian" territory by Pakistan. Additionally, by keeping its "back-channel" links with New Delhi open and active during the entire Kargil episode, the government gave credence to the malicious Indian propaganda that Kargil was a "rogue" military operation, which had been carried out to sabotage the great "Lahore spirit", unleashed by Vajpayee's "peace journey" to Pakistan in February 1999.

The Indian Prime Minister's bus journey to Lahore in February 1999 was part and parcel of the "camouflage to military plans in the making." It was used as diplomatic deception within the wider context of the Perception Management campaign by India.

Buying the Indian line on Kargil, as a result of successful Perception Management by India (employing primarily the media and Ministry of External Affairs), the international community, led by United States, exerted strong

⁴⁸ Maleeha Lodhi, *The Kargil Crisis: Anatomy of a Debacle*, Newslite (July 1999).

diplomatic pressure on Pakistan to vacate the Kargil heights and, also, to commit itself to observing the sanctity of the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir. Syed Rifaat Hussain narrates:

Frightened by the specter of an internationally supported full-scale Indian military retaliation, Nawaz Sharif sued for peace essentially on Indian terms. The July 4 joint statement which he signed with President Bill Clinton in Washington not only called for “concrete steps” aimed at the “restoration of the (LoC)” but also clearly stated that India-Pakistan dialogue would get underway after “the sanctity of the LoC has been fully restored.” India and the world have taken this to mean a unilateral undertaking by Pakistan not to stoke further the fires of armed struggle in the Indian-held part of Kashmir.⁴⁹

E. THE EXTERNAL ACTORS

The Kargil operation was carried out in a very different international environment. The motivations for the primary external actors—the United States and China—had changed over the years. Pakistan’s ties with U.S. in particular were even weaker in 1999, while, conversely the Americans had sought to improve relations with New Delhi.⁵⁰

The extent of Islamabad’s international isolation during the Kargil episode was dramatically illustrated by the studied indifference with which China dealt with the whole issue. During their June 1999 visits to China, Beijing told the Pakistani Foreign Minister and Prime Minister that Islamabad should not expect China to “take sides” in an armed conflict between India and Pakistan and that escalation of their tensions had ill-served the cause of regional peace and security.⁵¹ Though very clear that China stayed completely out of the Kargil conflict, the Indian Army

⁴⁹ Syed Rifaat Hussain, *War against Terrorism: Pakistani Perspective*, *IPRI Journal*. Vol. IV, No. 1, Winter 2004.

⁵⁰ For background, see Feroz Hassan Khan and Christopher Clary, “Dissuasion and Regional Allies: The Case of Pakistan,” *Strategic Insights*, 3, no. 10 (October 2004), <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2004/oct/khanOct04.asp>.

⁵¹ Syed Rifaat Hussain, *War against Terrorism: Pakistani Perspective*, *IPRI Journal*. Vol. IV, No. 1, Winter 2004.

Chief at the time of Kargil, V P Malik's book, "Kargil - From Surprise to Victory" contains an entire chapter trying to promote Chinese involvement in the Kargil conflict and, thus gain political mileage.

Even more significantly, the international community, especially the United States, became opposed to the idea of such limited conflicts occurring between two nuclear-armed neighbors.⁵²

F. PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF KARGIL

Public explanations of the planning for this gambit have been biased, as almost all of them came either from Indians, or, in case of other authors, the only story available to narrate was the version provided by India. In either case, the accounts helped perpetuate the Indian side of the story. Indian commentators typically view Kargil as the outgrowth of a revisionist Pakistani state seeking to alter the political and territorial *status quo*.⁵³ An extension of this line of thought can be found in the Kargil Review Committee report, which portrays the operation as an example of the relentless probing of an aggressive Pakistani military, looking for chinks in Indian defenses.⁵⁴ Other Indian commentators, and some liberal Pakistani authors, have asserted that Kargil exemplifies the frustration of the Pakistani military leadership as it struggled to reassert primacy over a civilian government that was pursuing a peace process that endangered the corporate interests of the Pakistani armed forces.⁵⁵ Shaukat Qadir, a retired

⁵² Strobe Talbott, *Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy, and the Bomb* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), p. 165. See, also Bruce Reidel, *American Diplomacy and the 1999 Kargil Summit at Blair House*, Policy Paper Series, 2002 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Center for the Advanced Study of India, 2002).

⁵³ See, for instance, Jasjit Singh, "The Fourth War," in *Kargil 1999: Pakistan's Fourth War for Kashmir*, Jasjit Singh, ed. (New Delhi: Knowledge World, 1999), 120-1; Lt. Gen. (ret.) Y. M. Bhami, *Kargil 1999: The Impregnable Conquered* (New Delhi: Gorkha, 2002), pp. 83, 89-90.

⁵⁴ See "Pak Modus Operandi and India's Response in the Past," in *From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report* (New Delhi: Sage, 2000), pp. 49-52.

⁵⁵ Gurmeet Kanwal, "Nawaz Sharif's Damning Disclosures," *The Pioneer*, 16 August 2000. For Pakistani critics of the military, see Sattar, Babar "Pakistan: Return to Praetorianism," in *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Role of the Military in Asia*, Muthiah Alagappa, ed. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 385-412 and Ahmed, Samina "Pakistan: Professionalism of an Interventionist Military," in *Military Professionalism in Asia*, Muthiah Alagappa, ed. (Honolulu: East-West Center, 2001), pp. 151-61.

Pakistan army official, whose accounts of Kargil remain questionable for reasons of personal grudges, has argued that Kargil was the product of a unique confluence of individuals in the Pakistani chain of command, all of whom had something to prove.⁵⁶ Furthermore, publications and statements by U.S. policymakers have tended to emphasize the role of nuclear weapons, highlighting how a nuclear deterrent can provide an umbrella under which limited conflicts can be fought.⁵⁷

All of these accounts tell the Indian version of the story as no Pakistani sources were available for quite some time. Given the tradition of secrecy within the civil and military bureaucracy of Pakistan, a comprehensive Pakistani analysis of the Kargil conflict, based on military and other sources, only made its appearance in 2003, four years after the outbreak of the conflict between India and Pakistan. Dr Shireen M Mazari's book - *The Kargil Conflict 1999: Separating Fact from Fiction* – is the first Pakistani effort to provide a rationale regarding the Kargil operations. The author took up the catalogue of myths woven into controversial speculations and, with substantiated facts, examined their background to show how “Pakistan got sucked into an ever-widening conflict as a result of pre-planned Indian actions ... which had incrementally escalated as a result of India raising the military, political and diplomatic ante.”⁵⁸ Mazari has presented Kargil as the natural outgrowth of historical grievances and a

⁵⁶ Shaukat Qadir, “An Analysis of the Kargil Conflict,” *RUSI Journal* (April 2002): pp. 24-30. Mazari notes that at the time Shaukat had his own axe to grind with the military government in Pakistan.

⁵⁷ Strobe Talbott compares Kargil to the Cuban missile crisis and quotes President William J. Clinton referring to it as “nuclear blackmail.” *Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy, and the Bomb* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), p 161, 165, and 167. Bruce Reidel, also, discusses Clinton's worry that “if the United States appeared to be acting under the gun of a nuclear threat its ability to restrain others from threatening use of their nuclear forces would be forever undermined.” See “American Diplomacy and the 1999 Kargil Summit at Blair House,” Policy Paper Series 2002 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Center for the Advanced Study of India, 2002). Sumit Ganguly's invocation of the “stability-instability” paradox is typical of academic analysts. See *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions since 1947* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001), pp. 122, 127. Also, see Sumit Ganguly and Devin Hagerty, *Fearful Symmetry: India-Pakistan Crises in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), pp. 143-166.

⁵⁸ Shireen Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999: Separating Fact from Fiction* (Islamabad: Ferozsons, 2004), p. 15.

continuation of tit-for-tat military practices common since the establishment of the Line of Control (LoC). Later, in 2006, a second notable published account, President of Pakistan and Chief of Army Staff General Pervez Musharraf's book, "In the Line of Fire – A Memoir", also contained an entire chapter on the Kargil Conflict. Musharraf portrays the Kargil operation as a brilliant tactical manoeuvre; yet, it is realized that the operation backfired politically. India used the Kargil operation in order to castigate Pakistan for cross border terrorism.

When India published its official inquiry report, *The Kargil Review Committee Report* in 2000, the Western audience, particularly its media and academics, saw this as the factual report on Kargil - especially since Pakistan did not publish its official version of what Kargil was all about. The United States, and its European allies, also, portrayed Kargil as a dangerous "adventure" on the part of Pakistan, given the nuclearization of the region.

The Kargil Project of the Center for Contemporary Conflict (CCC), Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, showed clearly the magnitude of the negative fallout for Pakistan as a result of no official disclosures/data on Kargil. The first Kargil conference of the CCC brought out the misperceptions and biases of the Kargil conflict.

The second phase of the CCC's Kargil project, which comprised meetings in New Delhi in September 2002, further bolstered the view that, unless Pakistan put forward a substantive explanation of Kargil, the record would remain biased and incorrect and Pakistan's case would go unheard by default. Indian attempts to exploit maximum advantage out of Kargil became truly absurd as, by the time of the New Delhi round of the CCC's discussions on Kargil, somehow the Indians were endeavoring to link al-Qaeda also to Kargil.⁵⁹

So the question that arises in one's mind is; why did Pakistan not follow the Indian example of instituting an inquiry commission and then publish the findings? The straight forward answer is provided by Mazari:

⁵⁹ See the CCC's Conference Report, New Delhi, India, 26-27 September 2002, entitled, "Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: Crises of 1999, 2002 and Beyond."

Quite simply, this has never been a part of Pakistan's strategic/political culture. Born out of a military culture inherited from the British Indian army, with a premium on secrecy, there are still no publicly available official assessments of the 1965 and 1971 Pak-India wars. Even the Hamood Ur Rehman Commission Report on the 1971 debacle was made public, in part, decades later. In the case of Kargil, the Sharif government's shifting stance and inability to take responsibility made it even more difficult to evaluate the Kargil conflict properly from a Pakistani perspective.

G. MEDIA IN KARGIL

During the Kargil conflict, India demonstrated its agility in handling a variety of media (e.g., television, print, radio, Internet) to disseminate and control the Indian message, shaping, in the process, both the international and the domestic misperception of events. India, through the use of media for Perception Management, demonstrated that, especially in the South Asian context, there is a dire need to develop media strategy as an instrument of warfare.

H. THEMES EMPLOYED BY INDIAN MEDIA

Indians used media brilliantly to salvage some pride from the mauling it received on the snowy peaks of Kargil. Kargil became one of the worst military nightmares for India. It not only caught them napping and off guard, but, also, exposed their extreme vulnerabilities and resulted in very high casualties. At the same time, the Indians deserve the credit for their resilience and for their successful media and diplomatic campaign. This enabled them to sell their story and doomed the Kargil operation, though a tactical Pakistani success, to strategic failure.

According to Hali, the way Indian media responded to the crisis, such as mobilizing its resources and organizing its television programs, newspaper reports, analyses, discussions, features, the famous "rogue army" posters, created a wide array of coverage. This convinced the world that Pakistan was the aggressor and India the aggrieved party. Propaganda, and Perception Management, were fully exploited to dupe their own countrymen. To enhance

their position and sanitize the Indian public from the truth, Pakistan television (PTV) was banned from Cable networks in India, and Pakistani newspapers were blocked on the Internet.⁶⁰

The role of the media in shaping domestic and international opinion and covering up Indian blunders regarding Kargil is evident in the headlines of major Indian newspapers printed during the time. Numerous Indian newspapers were filled with accounts portraying Pakistanis as "propped up intruders" in a "qualitatively different" infiltration. Such narratives in effect strengthened the view of India as a responsible and restrained nuclear nation victimized by its overzealous neighbor. Some example headlines are as follows:⁶¹

- "Evidence of Pak Intruders on Indian Side," *The Hindu*, 29 May 1999.
- "Intrusion Obviously Had Full Backing of Pak Government: India," *The Hindustan Times*, 27 May 1999.
- "Pakistan Army Officers Among Kargil Infiltrators," *The Statesman*, 25 May 1999.

Indians, also, made very intelligent use of the Internet and dedicated an exclusive website, www.vijayinkargil.com to spread their propaganda. Several websites (e.g., www.indiainfo.com, www.kargilonline.com) described numerous episodes of heroism at the front; supported Indian tactical and strategic decisions; updated events in real time, and narrated stories of families of soldiers enduring the loss of their loved ones. Trained public relations officers manned chat sites on the web. Pakistan, on the other hand, proved unable to launch an adequate counter attack on the media front. Even the very obvious Indian lies and claims of Vijay or victory could not be exposed. India did not permit media personnel to visit Kargil, Dras or Batalik war zone sectors. Zee TV and the 32 Indian Channels continued their misinformation against Pakistan and Pakistan lacked the wherewithal and the will power to tackle them on this extremely

⁶⁰ Sultan M Hali, "The Role of Media in War," PR Society of Indonesia. Accessed 20 June 2007. Available <http://www.pr-society.or.id/artikel4.asp>.

⁶¹ RAND Report, *Limited Conflicts Under the Nuclear Umbrella: Indian and Pakistani Lessons from the Kargil Crisis*, 2001.

volatile front. Obvious lies, such as victory at a strategically important height, Tiger Hill, in the Kargil-Dras sector, and the use of tactical aircraft Mirage-2000 HUD displays with doctored information, were continuously being telecast with serious TV News Channels, such as BBC and CNN re-transmitting them.⁶² The tactical and strategic picture the Indians were painting was seen and believed by the world.

The Indians, as a propaganda ploy aimed at the Pakistani public, showed TV coverage of their soldiers offering Janaza (funeral) prayers for dead Pakistani soldiers. But, unfortunately, they did not do their homework when formulating this propaganda and forgot that Muslims do not go into Sajda (prostration) during these prayers.⁶³

On 6 July 1999, the website of Pakistani newspaper “The Dawn” was blocked. Two days later a tab appeared on the net announcing “*Click here to read The Dawn*”⁶⁴ and a filtered and manipulated newspaper was available for the readers.

Some of the themes employed by Indians during Kargil operation to malign Pakistan’s image were:

- Propagated that the Kargil operation was masterminded by top army brass and that Pakistani troops were operating under cover as Kashmiri Mujahideen.
- Both the Indian military and media referred to *Mujahideen* (freedom fighters) or *Jehadis* as *Ghusbaityas* (intruders).⁶⁵ It is pertinent to mention here, despite the negative connotation the term has in the West, traditionally *Mujahideen* or *Jehadis* are Muslims fighting for just causes, from social issues to military war. These words were distorted by the Indians to refer to any military fighter who happens to be a Muslim, regardless of the aim of his fight.

⁶² Sultan M Hali, “The Role of Media in War,” PR Society of Indonesia. Accessed 20 June 2007. Available <http://www.pr-society.or.id/artikel4.asp>.

⁶³ Shireen M Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999: Separating Fact from Fiction* (Islamabad: Ferozsons, 2004), p. 55.

⁶⁴ AK Chakraborti, “Kargil - Inside Story,” Trishul India, 1999, p.152.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 46.

- Painted India, in various print and television stories, as a nation at the front line combating Islamic terrorism.
- Stated Pakistan committed aggression and was isolated internationally.
- Publicized that Pakistan decided to withdraw due to low morale of troops, heavy casualties and mounting international pressure.
- Stated that Pakistan was not capable of fighting conventional war.
- In addition to the above:
 - Created victory hype through propaganda.
 - Propagated the concept of Shahadat for Dharti Mata, sacrificing one's life while defending the motherland, to boost the morale of Indian troops.
 - Created war hysteria with the help of professional cricket players, film actors and other popular personalities.

I. PAKISTAN MEDIA RESPONSE AND WEAKNESSES

Pakistani media failed to counter the media invasion launched by India in Kargil scenario primarily because they remained ill-informed or not informed at all. The first confrontation between the Indian and Pakistan forces took place on 2 May 1999. However, the Pakistani press was given joint briefings by the Minister for Information, Foreign Office Spokesman and the DG Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) in the third week of May, 1999. And, it was not till mid-June that Pakistan Television began programs on Kargil, including the military aspects.⁶⁶

Some of the weaknesses observed in Pakistani media response are highlighted as under:

- **Lack of Media Infrastructure.** Pakistan lacked requisite media infrastructure to respond to the situation. There were only two TV channels which were operating with limited coverage outside the country. Newspapers gave desired coverage to the issue, but they failed to create any impact due to their limited international circulation. On the home front, however, they enjoyed more credibility than any other media components.

⁶⁶ Shireen Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999: Separating Fact from Fiction* (Islamabad: Ferozsons, 2004), p. 65.

- **Disorganized Media.** The bad effects of lack of requisite media infrastructure were more pronounced due to the inability to mobilize and organize the available media infrastructure to counter Indian propaganda.
- **Absence of Clear and Effective Media Policy.** The Pakistan media response was directionless due to the absence of any clear media policy at the time. No specific theme was created to direct the effort in a unified manner. All components of media were found to be dealing with the situation according to their own perceptions without any coordination.
- **Reactive Nature.** The media remained reactive to India propaganda. It lacked offensive posture and well coordinated and planned themes to raise the morale of the troops or to shield them against Indian propaganda.
- **Absence of Committed Correspondents.** To have better coverage and analysis of the situation and to disseminate the desired information to the audience through media there was a need to have committed correspondents and trained Public Relations Officers working in close harmony with Defense Forces. This did not happen.
- **Access and Facilities to Media.** Indians provided more access and facilities to international media than Pakistan. Reporters were helicopter-lifted to forward areas and provided the fax and communication resources in field areas. As a result, all war clips shown on various satellite channels, including BBC and CNN, were found to be filmed in India. This served as a morale booster for Indian nation and troops. At the same time, it strengthened Indian stance of fighting a retaliatory battle to evict the intruders from their own territory by showing battles on Indian Territory.

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VI. CONCLUSION

Those who do not learn from the history are relegated to become a part of the history.

Sun Tzu

Perception Management is a core IO capability for 21st century warrior and peacekeeper – and for every stage between the two. In today's environment, PM structure, concepts and approaches, coupled with media developments in the world, leave this field exposed to be exploited by the adversary. It should be treated with high importance as a core IO capability vis-à-vis its current standing as a related IO capability in U.S. doctrine. The 1999 Kargil conflict has aptly highlighted the fact that information is power and the media; which in fact processes, produces and disseminates it, has emerged as a powerful tool. It is the strength and the power of the media, which has made it a critical tool of Perception Management.

A. INDO-PAK KARGIL CONFLICT

The whole Kargil episode was a political victory for India, while from the Pakistani perspective, it was a successful tactical operation (albeit one which was not accompanied by a coordinated politico-diplomatic plan), it turned into a politico-diplomatic setback. The successful end-state was achieved by the Indians by employing Perception Management as a core IO capability and, therein, using Media as a primary tool to shape favorable domestic and international opinion.

Pakistan's tactical successes were not translated into strategic gains due to the lack of clarity over policy. Hence, there was no Perception Management. Thus, while the Kargil episode "showed a tactical ingenuity and boldness in its execution – especially given the difficult terrain and inhospitable climatic environments ... the whole event revealed critical shortcomings and lacunas in

the Pakistani political decision-making system ... the whole episode was essentially a series of incremental steps on both sides, that, in a highly combustible politico-diplomatic environment produced a sharp, localised war.”⁶⁷

The crux of the Indo-Pak Kargil conflict 1999 was:

- **Kargil - Not a One-Off Operation.** As Musharraf noted, “[Kargil was] the latest in a series of moves and countermoves at a tactical level by India and Pakistan along the Line of Control.” When reviewing Kargil conflict, a complete history of injustices that Pakistan has been subjected to from the onset at independence in 1947, also needs to be reviewed.
- **Fear of Indian Aggression and Mujahideen Factor.** Pakistan’s sense of historical grievance against India - fueled especially by exploitation of an internal crisis in Eastern Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in 1971, occupation of the Siachen glacier in 1984 despite the 1972 Simla agreement, planning of a pre-emptive attack on Pakistan’s nuclear facilities in the garb of the 1987 Brasstacks exercise, suppression of the Kashmiri people for decades and a series of subsequent incursions and skirmishes along the northern Line of Control (LoC) raised the concerns and fear of yet another Indian aggression in 1999 in Northern areas. Therefore, Pakistani forces took a “forward defense posture across the LoC” at a time when Kashmiri Mujahideen had occupied vacated Indian winter positions to settle scores with Indians and draw them away from the Indian Occupied Kashmir.
- **India - Deadlocked Militarily.** It was the military deadlock that forced India to go international in order to seek international pressure to get Pakistan to withdraw from the Kargil heights along the LoC.
- **Media - “The Tool” For Perception Management.** India was able to turn a military defeat into a substantial political / diplomatic victory by effectively employing media as “the tool” for Perception Management offensive.
- **No Real PM Effort by Pakistan.** Pakistan was unable to translate a tremendous military success into a politico-diplomatic victory due to the absence of any real Perception Management effort. As Mazari notes:

[During Kargil conflict], the information war was lost from the start because of the decision not to inform

⁶⁷ Shireen M Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999: Separating Fact from Fiction* (Islamabad: Ferozsons, 2004).

the public at home [Pakistan] and an equally half-hearted approach regarding what to give out to the international community.⁶⁸

B. MEDIA – A FORCE MULTIPLIER

Media, a key tool of Perception Management, is a force multiplier and a weapon of war. Failure to recognize and counter enemy usage of media, as is strikingly evident with Pakistan's Kargil conflict, could lead to avoidable military failures and changed outcomes of conflicts. Decisions are no longer based on events but on how the events are presented. It is, therefore, important to lay greater emphasis on the role of media in war and train for it in peacetime. Strong national news agencies are vital for improving each country's national and international reporting.

The Kargil conflict has, also highlighted the pivotal role media plays in changing the final outcome of the conflicts. The most effective way of censoring the media is simply to deny them access as was effectively carried out by the Indians in Kargil. This can go wrong, as the press can become volatile. The Indians got away with it in Kargil by appealing to the Indian media's sense of patriotism.

Hali notes that "Media Spin" has become a new principle of war.⁶⁹ "Media Spin" is defined as paying close attention to public relations, recognizing that public support is an essential ingredient of combat success. At the same time one must be cognizant of the fact that media is a vital tool in shaping the international opinion. The military must not take media coverage of combat operations for granted, and should avoid operations that will alienate public support, while ensuring maximum media coverage of success stories: In an age where 24-hour instantaneous, battlefield news coverage is a fact of life, paying attention to Media Spin is of paramount importance for a combat commander.

⁶⁸ Shireen Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999: Separating Fact from Fiction* (Islamabad: Ferozsons, 2004), p. 76.

⁶⁹ Sultan M Hali, "The Role of Media in War," PR Society of Indonesia. Accessed 20 June 2007. Available <http://www.pr-society.or.id/artikel4.asp>.

It is vital to mention here that the use of Perception Management, as a core IO capability wherein media is a key tool, is not limited to the Indo-Pak scenario. It has all the more relevance in the U.S. context -- especially with regards to the war against terrorism. Further research should be done to evaluate the use of PM in the war against terrorism.

C. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The open society and free press, as in the case of U.S., have their own vulnerabilities and the authoritarian states / non-state actors have clear advantages in mounting media campaigns. The same can be researched further as how U.S., with its open society and free press, is, given the U.S situation in the context of the growing need for Perception Management in the war against terrorism, even more vulnerable.

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